



PUNCH

OR
THE LONDON CHARIVARI



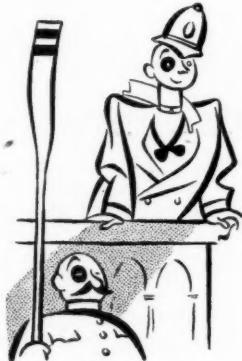
Vol. CCII No. 5265

January 28 1942

Charivaria

WE are reminded by a weekly paper that bananas were unknown in this country in 1842. Much the same applies in 1942.

• • •
A high German officer died suddenly in Berlin and the jury returned a verdict of natural causes. This was probably correct, because HITLER did not order a state funeral.



This Week's Understatement

“His foot-drill needs attention, but this may improve when he finds his feet.”—*Instructor's Report on O.C.T.U. Cadet*.

• • •
The fact that when Mr. CHURCHILL left Plymouth for London after his return home from America he was not smoking a cigar, lends colour to the German rumours that our Prime Minister was going about disguised.

• • •
“Berliners are lovers of bird-life and take a great interest in the pigeons that flutter over the city squares,” says a writer in a Berlin newspaper. Local ornithologists, however, are not so happy about the recent appearance in the streets of machine-gun nests.

• • •
It seems from the latest Axis claims regarding our naval losses that we shall have to build another two or three hundred vessels before we haven't got any.

• • •
The German public is now told that the Russians now have a numerical superiority on the Eastern Front. The opinion is growing throughout the Reich that they will have to be re-annihilated.

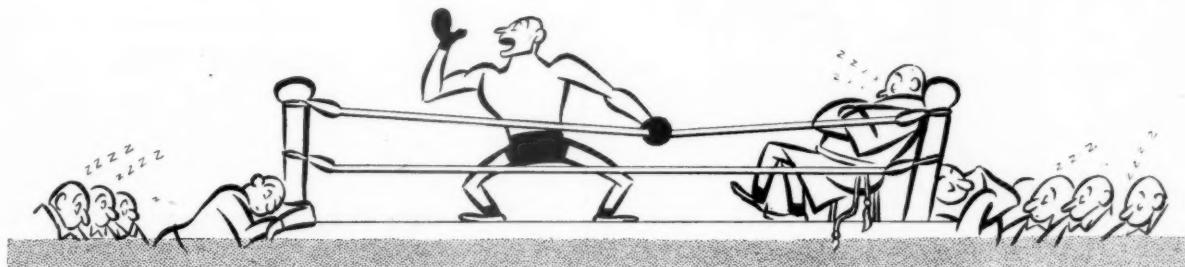
• • •
“Commando technique in house-to-house fighting is to kick open doors and then duck,” says a writer. Doubtless this will be remembered after the war when operations on the vacuum-cleaner front are resumed.



• • •
“This lottery has to me all the appearances of being a lottery,” said Sir G— C—, Chairman of the U— Magistrates on Monday, when hearing the evidence of a lottery case.”—*Local Paper*.

Can't fool him.

• • •
Before a boxing match in America one of the contestants made a speech about his opponent. This is new pugilistic technique—leading with the chin.



Just Guessing

I WANT to read a brightly-written article by a man who has quite recently been nowhere and seen nothing. A man who takes the simple view that an army which is going forward is getting along better than an army which is going backward, that winter is colder than summer, and if people wear anything it is probably clothes, and if they eat anything it is most likely to be food.

It is not necessary that this man should know the names of all the German generals nor all the Russian towns. I only ask that he should be a broadminded, level-headed thinker not deeply interested in lice, knowing at which end of a gun the bullet comes out, and able to do ordinary addition and multiplication sums.

I only want him for a change, because I am becoming not a little annoyed by the man who has quite recently left Germany with all his luggage and the man who has quite recently left Germany with only half of it. Both of these men know everything that there is to be known about Europe and the Eastern Front, and they contradict each other like a couple of angry dogs. They make my life almost intolerable. At breakfast-time they make me spill my coffee, and if it were summer they would be as bad as wasps in the marmalade.

The second of these two fellows has now told me four or five hundred times that the German armies are all frozen solid, have horrible typhus, are entirely naked except for a piece of morale which they wear round their waists, walk backwards with their hands tied behind them, and feed on bits of burnt wood and lumps of snow. Their tanks have no engines. Their planes have no wings. Seven

millions of them have been killed or eaten by the Russians, and the rest taken prisoners. All their generals have been sacked by Hitler, and they have countered this astute move by sacking him.

All the names of the German generals are quite different from the names of the German generals that the first man knows, and even if they weren't it wouldn't make any difference to me. I don't know how many generals the Germans have got; and I don't know how many lice. And I don't care. How can I? for the first fellow has a high opinion of the German generals and of the German army too. He thinks they have morale all over them, and frequently walk forwards as well as backwards. They use muffs with hot dogs inside to protect their hands from the cold, and when they see a Russian they make faces at him instead of running away.

Seven millions of them haven't been killed and eaten by Russians, because they never had seven millions there. Most of them, in fact, are sitting in gliders waiting for a hitch-hike to take them to England when the invading season sets in. They only pretend to have typhus in order to deceive the enemy. They like the cold frosty weather (with a tang in the air), and burnt wood is their favourite food. As for the generals, Hitler may sack them one day in the week, but only as a sort of good-natured joke. And the next day when they sack Hitler he roars with laughter, slaps them on the back and says "Also."

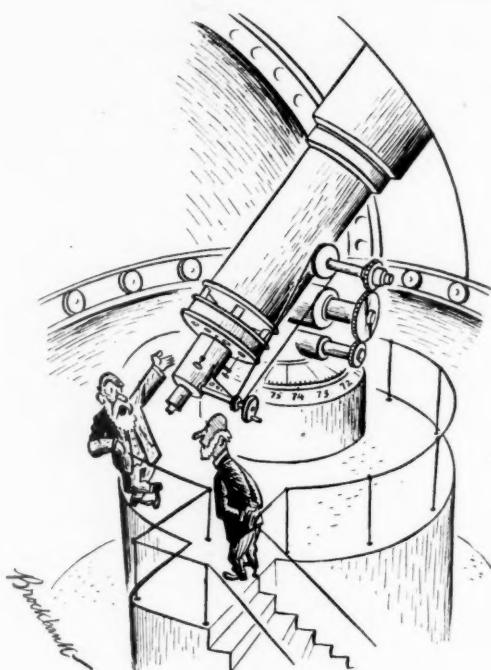
It is just the same (according to this observer) with all the civilian population. They enjoy the by-play between Hitler and his generals, and worship him all the more. If they have any objection to the retreat of their army it is because they hoped to get rid of them for good. They revel in being bombed. There is so much coffee in Hamburg that they use it to light their fires, and they have butter every day. Possibly the whole retreat from Moscow is a kind of game of hide-and-seek which Hitler is playing with Stalin. And if anybody doesn't think the Germans have five million parachutists ready to put down on our aerodromes at a moment's notice he is a fool.

All this annoys the first man who has just come out of Germany, and he hits back. The Germans have lost all confidence in Hitler. He is no longer a god, but a gowk. The inhabitants of Berlin don't eat butter, they eat bricks and chairs. They are so frightened of British bombs that they have left Berlin altogether and gone to live in the woods. They would like to go to Dresden or Leipzig, but they can't because none of the trains run anywhere, not having any coal, and the Gestapo have altered the time-table and set the signals wrong. . . . And so it goes on and on.

That's why I should like to read something written by a man who has quite recently been nowhere and seen nothing, and will knock these two fellows' heads together and write sense.

Or perhaps they could get him for the B.B.C.

EVOE.



"Can't see a ruddy planet for Fortresses."

THIS IS THE LAST TIME

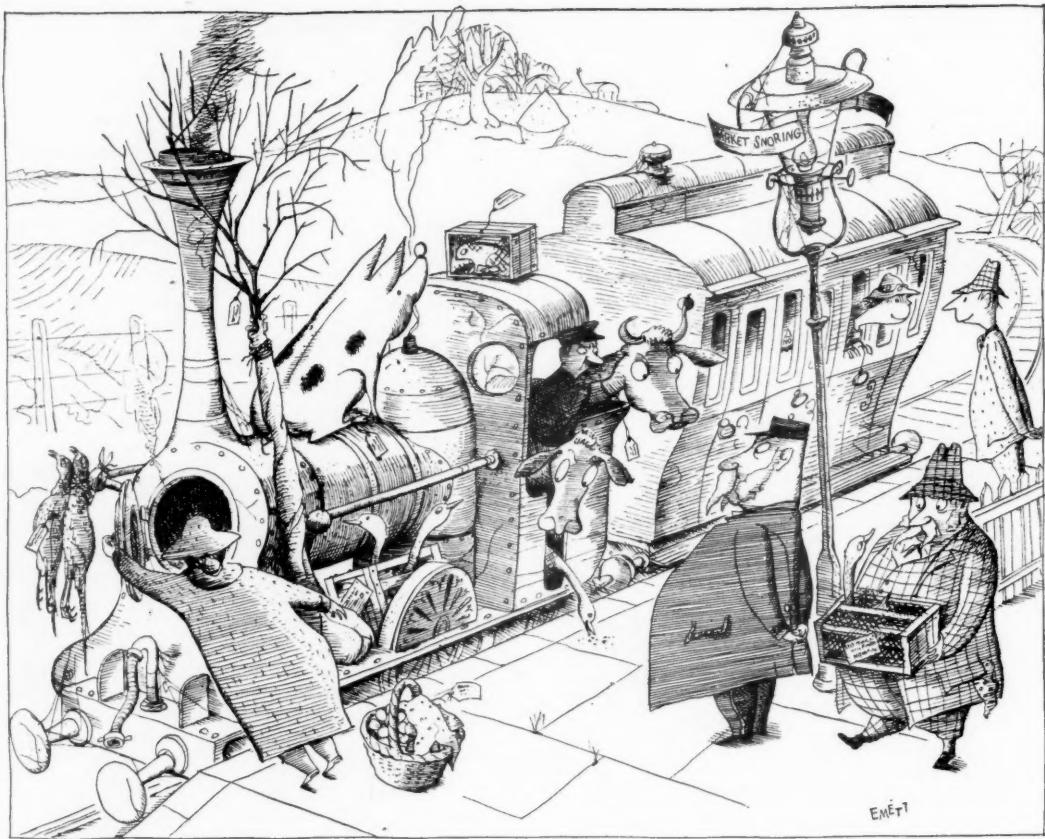
we can remind you about the great Waste Paper Contest. It ends on January 31st. Make a big effort, put out all you can for collection, try to do better than the rest of the country, and by so doing help four great charities and

THE WAR EFFORT



THE LADY IN THE WELL

"I keep trying to get out, but these gentlemen will quarrel so."



"When are you going to see the Directors about a luggage-van?"

Little Talks

DARN good!

Yes. What is it?
I think it's horse.

Oo! Take it away!

Why? What did you think it was?
Beef. Or possibly pork.

Have you ever studied the private life of the pig?

Yes.

And the usual surroundings of the bullock—or whatever beef is?

Yes.

Beef—the Roast Beef of Old England—seems positively to *enjoy* standing in the deepest mud, covered with flies. The pig is a byword for filth. Yet when the flesh and bones of these unlovely quadrupeds are put before you, you don't shudder and push your plate away. Why, then—

Ah, but beef—that's different.

Pure prejudice—and habit. The horse, on the other hand, is essentially a clean-living animal. It eats grass, oats, and so forth—not anything flung into the pig-tub. It must be a mass of vitamins. Everybody, after all, likes horses, though they may be terrified of them—

That's just the point.

Ah! You mean it's not that you don't like eating horse, but that you don't like the *idea* of eating a horse?

That's it.

Like the people who can't bear to eat their own dear little rabbits?

Yes.

You're a humbug. Well, I'm sure

you mean it. But I don't believe it's that, really. I suppose you don't mind tucking in to a dear little goose?

No.

Or a sweet little pheasant?

Of course not.

Or even a pretty little grouse?

No.

You could eat half a dozen plover's eggs—if there were any—without turning a hair?

My hat, I could!

Without giving a thought to the poor mother plover poking about in the long grass and mourning for its young?

Well, it wouldn't worry me a lot.

Could you use a plate of whitebait at this moment?

I certainly could.

Poor little baby fish—who've never had a chance to see life? And I

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

suppose you gobble them down, heads and all?

Most of 'em.

Yet if I were to offer you a steak from a hulking great cart-horse, you'd go all sentimental?

Well, perhaps you're right. It isn't entirely that. There is something—well, rather revolting about the idea of eating a cart-horse.

You don't mind eating a sheep's kidneys?

I only wish I could get 'em.

What if it were a race-horse?

That might make a difference, I feel.

You mean you'd enjoy making a meal off a Derby winner? But that's pure sensationalism.

It's all very illogical, I know.

But—

I met a delicately-nurtured girl from the country the other day who said they'd just eaten a horse in the home. It was a sort of family horse, too—been in the family for years. But this girl said she liked it.

Liked eating it?

Yes. And, what's more, she said she liked *liking* it. Because, you see, she had thoroughly disliked the horse. It was a bad-tempered tiresome horse, it seems—you know, one of those animals that turn round and nibble your toes, or suddenly fling their heads back and biff you on the nose. Well, for years, she said, she'd suffered from this creature, always having to go for rides when she didn't want to, and nearly always being thrown off into a midden. So when she got down to a nice roast loin of dear detestable old Bessie, she thoroughly enjoyed it, and had helping after helping.

One of the Modern Young, I fear.

I dunno. We talk a lot of nonsense. I'm always so amused when I hear people say that certain animals are "dirty feeders."

Mackerel?

That's one of them, I believe. Well, I don't know a lot about the mackerel; all I know is that from time to time, like you, he has a large dish of whitebait. And, like you, he gobbles them, head and all. "Dirty feeders," indeed! Look at us!

Ah, but we are rather more careful where our food comes from—

Are we? I'm darn sure that the ordinary clean-minded horse—

The average horse?

All right—would be horrified if he knew what we ate. All these offals and entrails, and internal organs

Oh, come, we don't eat "entrails," do we?

What about tripe?

What is tripe? I know I used to like it.

We'll look it up in the *O.E.D.* Here you are—"1) The first or second stomach of a ruminant, especially of the ox, prepared as food; formerly including also the entrails of swine and fish."

"Entrails"?

Yes. But, of course, "entrails" only means—we'll look that up—Here you are: "Entrails: the intestines or internal parts generally; the inside."

Golly!

Yes. Look at you and your kidneys! I mean, the sheep's kidneys. Ox's kidneys, I dare say, too. Have you ever considered the function of the kidney?

Yes.

Well, then, fancy eating anybody's kidneys! What should we say if we caught a mackerel eating a dead man's kidneys?

We should say he was a dirty feeder.

Quite. Then, take the liver.

What?

Take the liver. Have you ever considered the nature and function of the liver?

Mildly.

And yet you continually eat somebody's liver.

Yes. Whose liver is it, by the way?

I never know.

A horse's.

What?

No. As a matter of fact, I think it's a calf's. What's more, it's supposed to be unusually good for you. But I'll bet you couldn't get a decent horse to look at a calf's liver. Yet you—

Half a minute!

Yet you, who eat liver, and kidneys,

and the second stomachs of ruminants, and the heads of small fish, and, for all I know, calves' heads as well, have the cheek to turn up your nose at the rump of an honest horse—

Yes, but look here—

By the way, you must be hungry. I've done very well myself. We'll try to get you something. George!

Who's George?

I don't know. But I always try to avoid yelling "Waiter." Talking of horse, I suppose if things get really tough, one may still be invited to the last meeting of the Jockey Club and proudly assist in consuming the last Derby winner.

Yes. By that time Saddle of Horse or Foal Cutlet may be the supreme delicacy.

And what it won't cost!

Is horse rationed?

I don't know. It will be.

Look here, old boy, you ought not to talk like this, even in fun.

Why not?

You know why. It will get to Goebbels. And you know what he'll make of it.

Old boy, it's far too late and life is far too short to start worrying about the Goebbels sense of humour. Anyhow, I'm sure we've got more horses than the Huns.

Here's our waiter.

Hullo, George. Look here, my friend's still hungry. Didn't like the meat. By the way, what was it?

Venison, Sir. Sent to us specially by the Earl of Bunwardine—

Venison, eh? A dear little deer? I thought it was something out of the way.

Venison? Damn! Give me some more.

A. P. H.



"If you're Dr. Johnson, where's Boswell?"
"I'm riding him, as usual."



"First of all you check whether it's run out of water."

Aunt Tabitha and Her Circle

OUR conversation had already been acutely literary for some time when my Aunt Tabitha strode in, lively as a cold Welsh rabbit after a hard day's work on her new novel; and she had taken charge of the discussion before you could say "Nat Gould" or "J. T. Fairfax-Blakeborough."

"If I look pale and interesting," she boomed, "it is because I am exhausted."

"You look pale," her thin uncle conceded.

"Creative work," said Aunt Tabitha, mopping her brow, "takes it out of one. If it was ever there," she added with a glance at her great-great-Aunt Maud, who has written her memoirs from time to time.

Her great-great-Aunt Maud contented herself with replying "Always scrabble, scrabble, scrabble, hey, Mrs. Gibbon?"

One of the cousins discreetly intervened to ask why Aunt Tabitha was exhausted.

"I have been working the whole day," she replied, "on the big renunciation scene in my new novel. My heroine—who of course has a nose, or a mouth (I have not yet decided which), a little too long, short, thick, narrow, bony, red or what-have-you for perfect beauty—"

"Why must she have either whatever?" asked Aunt Tabitha's fat uncle, making a deprecatory gesture to show that he was not intentionally speaking Welsh.

"You must have noticed that these limitations are needed," Aunt Tabitha explained, "to keep the whole affair within the bounds of probability, and so that the most bottle-nosed reader may be able to identify herself—"

"Why not just give the girl a few warts?" her thin uncle suggested.

"There is no need to bring Oliver Cromwell into this," said Aunt Tabitha severely. "Let us get back to the renunciation scene. My heroine is writing a letter, and I

cannot decide whether she should say 'Love to all at home.' Is she the sort of girl who does love all at home, and even if she is, would she say so?—particularly in a letter to a tallow-chandler? You see the intricate and subtle problems of character with which we novelists are confronted."

"Personally," her thin uncle said with deliberation, "I think that your heroine or anybody else is about as likely to use the phrase 'Love to all at home' in a letter to a tallow-chandler as the well-known B.B.C. is to have its telephone cut off for non-payment of rent."

"Is that your honest opinion?"

"It is."

"Thank you," said Aunt Tabitha, making a note. "I am always grateful for an honest opinion from a fresh mind, whether the face is fresh or not. It is not always easy for me, writing as I do with furious inspiration, oblivious to all but the overwhelming impulse, and subject to loss by evaporation—"

"Do you pay no attention to Style?" interrupted her great-great-Aunt Maud. "Mr. Buffon used to say to me, 'Maud, mon chou,' he used to say—"

"I write in the Fine Writing style," Aunt Tabitha explained, "which comes naturally and by instinct to those with an adequate stratum of marzipan in the head. I am fortunate enough to be able to allow my Style to look after itself. In my novel, set in and played out against the immemorially age-old backgrounds of India and eighteenth-century English village life, where my hero, Sir Rajah de Coverley, stalks hand in hand—"

"Is he the tallow-chandler?" asked one of the cousins.

"Not directly. It is a job handed up from son to father," Aunt Tabitha said. "In the whole book I tell with deep and well-nigh incredible understanding of the manifold problems with which gallant and gay and clear-eyed and unafraid and laughing and freckled and boneheaded and gay and gallant youth to-day finds itself face to face."

"How about saving a few of those 'ands,' pal, by an extended use of commas?" suggested her thin uncle with deceptive mildness.

"Never!" Aunt Tabitha cried. "They are of the essence. They are part of the Fine Writing style."

"I knew a Fine Writer once," declared her eldest great-grandfather, "who used to spit on his ands before starting some tremendous task."

"You spit on mine and see where it gets you," said Aunt Tabitha ominously, fondling a heavy adjective.

There was a pause.

"Well, personally," Aunt Tabitha's fat uncle at length observed brightly, "I think it all sounds rather good."

"'Good' isn't the *word*," enthusiastically cried her maternal grandmother, or Grammar.

"Bad," on the other hand," said her thin uncle, "is."

R. M.

The Latest Intelligence

"The general principles of treatment of burns . . .

(a) It is essential, of course, that the patient should be removed from the fire."—*First Aid Manual*.

"BOMBS IN SCOTLAND

A single enemy aircraft dropped bombs at a point on the North-East coast of Scotland yesterday morning. There has been no report of any damage or casualties.

The Japanese have covered this distance in 30 days, an advance at the rate of 12 miles a day."—*Daily Paper*.

Stands Scotland where it did?

Salvage

MRS. LAPIN had rung me up twice about the waste paper. Our weight hadn't been up to that of the next village for the second time running. Something must be done about it. Could I help? She'd leave a sack on her way to the W.V.S. meeting. As I conscientiously sent *Punch* on to Aunt Katie, and the daily paper had to be kept for fires and things, there was nothing for it but to turn out the bottom drawer of the bureau.

It was a lumbering heavy drawer, but it opened at last with a thud.

The paid bills of 1930 could go, and as I noticed items of drinks long drunk and hats long forgotten, with the unrelenting price still there in black and white, it was just as well. Recipes untested, patterns untried, prescriptions superseded, newspaper-cuttings never reread. I was getting on well.

The children's essays weren't so very promising after all, nor the envelope full of golden curls so delicious now that their hair was dark or smarmed down with oil.

The clever little sketch by that girl who was going in for designing was hardly worth keeping, and I couldn't remember the point of the joke: I was glad I had been firm about things in the visitors' book.

Those congratulations were a bit hollow, as the legacy had been invested in the Ruhr, and the lease of the house rather lost its point since Hitler had been at it. Nor did we look funny any longer in the snapshots of private theatricals. I remembered tying up the bundle of papers called *The Great War*, thinking they'd be unique anyway, but even the label looked a little foolish now.

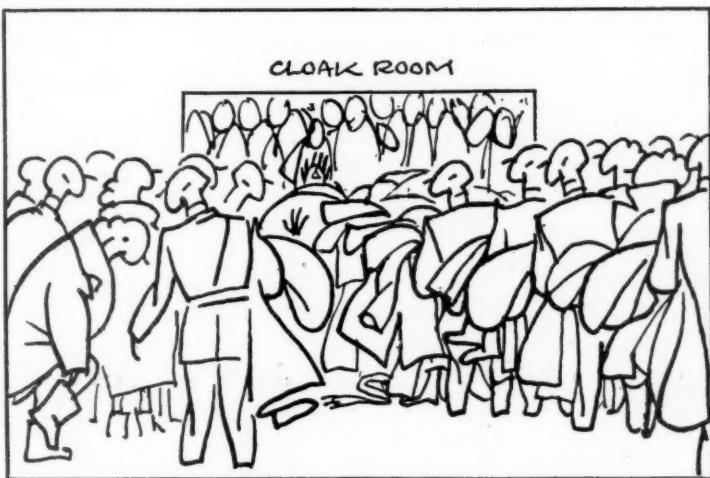
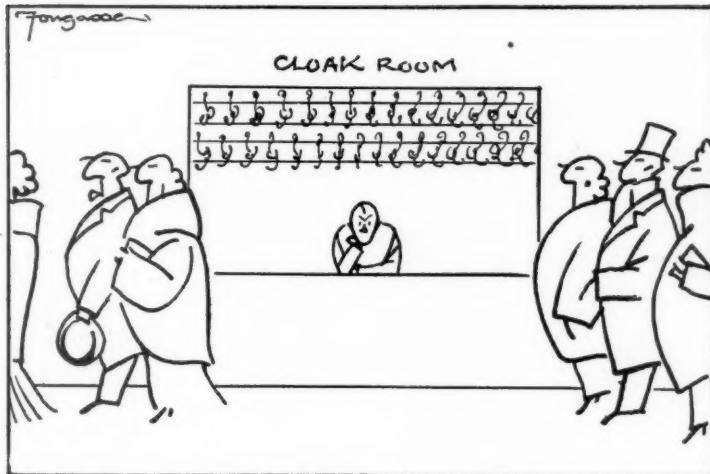
The formal correspondence I had had with a poet had been intriguing—until I met him.

I really couldn't go all through those interesting letters from Singapore. And would I ever bind the sixpenny editions with the remnants of Italian paper or make a scrap screen out of the old Christmas cards? The W.I. certificate for darning would do beautifully, my Confirmation card was on the best paper, and the out-of-date calendar wasn't worth keeping any longer for the quotations.

There were all those letters from school, and from Oxford; and could that writing on an envelope ever have made my heart beat faster?

The torn-off tags of cheque books, reports, lists, diagrams, documents, testimonials, memoranda, love-letters,

ANOTHER CHANGED FACE
THE THEATRE CLOAK-ROOM



2

they should all go. The gilt was off the gingerbread: it was much more sensible not to keep anything. I was glad Mrs. Lapin had kept me up to the mark.

There was a lot more in the drawer, but then the sack was nearly full. It wasn't sentiment, but I couldn't quite dump in all the rest regardless. The glamour had of course gone, but after all, keeping records was important. I was much too old for romantic nonsense about old letters, or to shrink

from unearthing a skeleton, but I could finish another day.

I hastily bundled the rest back and with some difficulty, pushing first one side and then the other, got the drawer shut with a thud.

○ ○

"Guests taken country house, short or long period; 4 double rooms; servants left; owner away."—*Advt.*
Any furniture?



"Look here, I wish you'd go to the main entrance. It's only a couple of hundred yards down the road, and it'd save me all the bother of shooting you."

WORLD WAR

THE British Navy is now facing danger in most of the seas of the world. The PUNCH COMFORTS FUND enables you to express your gratitude in the tangible form of extra comforts this winter.

Donations will be gratefully received and acknowledged by Mr. Punch at PUNCH COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouvierie Street, London, E.C.4.

AUDITORS' CERTIFICATE

We have audited the books of the PUNCH HOSPITAL COMFORTS FUND for the year ended 31st December, 1941, with the vouchers relating thereto.

We certify that the whole of the expenses of administering the Fund have been defrayed by the Proprietors of PUNCH and that all payments made from the Fund have been for the purchase of materials for distribution.

101 Leadenhall Street, London, E.C.3.
16th January, 1942.

J. H. HUCILL & Co.
Chartered Accountants,
Hon. Auditors.

Trial by Snow

EAR HOUSE-AGENT,—I have a great liking for snow. I like its smoothness and whiteness, and it pains me that people attack and obliterate these admirable qualities of snow by scraping and shovelling it up into dirty heaps as soon as it has landed. In Switzerland, where I used to go occasionally in peace-time, they leave it alone and it looks very well indeed. One can walk in it there without remorse because it will certainly snow again before very long and fill up the footmarks, and there is in any case so much of it that a footmark here and there makes little difference.

I am not a keen snowballer, but it gives me pleasure to construct a snow-man, provided there is no unnecessary trampling about. The ideal arrangement is that there should be a further fall of snow, immediately after the completion of the snow-man, just heavy enough to cover up the bare patches left by the work of construction, but not so severe as to distort or blur the outlines of the figure.

I have, you see, a real feeling for snow. But I think it out of place in a loft. The whole atmosphere of the place—the darkness, the sloping rafters, the old fire-irons, the very cistern itself with its attendant pipes—these are not fit accompaniments for the purest and fairest of Nature's carpets. In short, some means should be found of preventing snow driving in under the tiles and settling in the loft.

Our relations hitherto have been, I am glad to say, of the happiest. We like the house, we pay the rent whenever you remind us in your courteous way that the time has come, and your client, the owner, has every confidence in us as fit and proper persons to enjoy and possess the said dwelling-house—or so I judge from the fact that he has not as yet taken advantage of that clause in the agreement which permits him to enter the said dwelling-house from time to time and point out the gravy-marks on the dining-room wall. So much for the past. I am writing this letter to point out that if I ever again have to go through the experience I went through this afternoon, the said relations will deteriorate.

Ingress to the loft is obtained through a trap-door in the bathroom. That, I think, is how you yourself, with your characteristic English love of understatement, would put it. The actual process, however, is longer.

When I had taken a look at the trap-door and decided that, despite appearances, it must have been designed to admit the passage of a human body, I at once began to cry out for a pair of steps, making a great clamour so that all the people in the house ran together to the bathroom to see what was to do. When they were assembled and my purpose was made clear to them, there was a sharp cleavage of opinion, some clinging to me and with tears and sobs begging me to give up so perilous an enterprise and (what particularly moved me) beseeching me to remember in what a sad case my wife and little children would be left were I to become permanently wedged in the aperture, while others of sterner mould, or perhaps with a better eye for an opening, went off eagerly to fetch the steps.

Upon these, when brought, I mounted and, forcing up the trap-door with my hands, thrust my head into the loft. And here let me say that, whether on account of the height of the bathroom ceiling or the lowness of the kitchen steps, my chin was scarcely above the level of the loft floor even when I had brought myself, with great perturbation of spirit, to stand upon the topmost step. I do not know, my dear House-Agent, whether you have ever attempted to obtain ingress to a loft in such circumstances, but if you

have you will know that the crisis comes when the upward *pull* of the arms has to be transferred into a downward *push*, i.e., at about the moment when the shoulders have been brought level with the hands. This manœuvre, owing to some peculiarity in the construction of the human elbows, cannot be carried out. There is a second of furious struggle, followed by a second of suspended animation, then the whole system collapses and the body begins its long spectacular descent. As the arms straighten the legs thrash out wildly, knocking the steps over; the fingers, unable to sustain the sudden strain, tear away from their hold and the body plunges out of control on to the prostrate steps. As a rule the impact breaks the steps up into lengths convenient for use as splints.

When we had righted the steps and restored the whole of the interior of the aforesaid demised premises to as good order, condition and tenable repair as the same were in at the date of taking possession, I once again shook off those weak spirits that sought to detain me and, mounting the steps, again essayed entry. This time it was my plan to overcome the inertia of the body at the most critical moment by obtaining lateral thrust from the right foot, for I had observed, while sitting on the floor attending to my hurts, that a bold and agile man might get a purchase with one foot on the lintel of the bathroom door. And this, in fact, I did, obtaining so much purchase in my extremity that the entry of my body into the loft and the rending away of the lintel from the wall were as near as maybe simultaneous.

Now when those that were below had handed me my torch and said good-bye, I began to look about me, and immediately there came upon me that great sense of loneliness and desolation that besets all men in lofts, but particularly those whose return to the bosom of their family is as fraught with peril and difficulty as mine was likely to be. Indeed, throughout all the time I spent in that terrible loft the prospect of the descent I must make through the hole weighed heavily upon my thoughts and did much to confuse me and cloud my judgment. Nevertheless I pressed boldly forward, treading warily upon the beams or joists, as I believe them to be called (for a man who sets foot in the space between the beams does good neither to himself nor to the ceiling below him), and so became aware of certain great heaps and drifts of snow lodged among the rafters and piled here and there about the floor.

Now this, as may well be believed, caused me to set up a great cry—for I had entered the loft in order to carry out a routine inspection of the cistern, not to disport myself in the snow—and when the household had again come running to the mouth of the shaft I told them of the calamity that had befallen us and begged them to furnish me at once with pails, shovels, brushes, dust-pans and other suitable apparatus lest the snow should melt by reason of the warmth of the house (though that is not great) and precipitate a deluge of water through the ceilings.

When these implements were forthcoming I set to work after the following manner. First I set a pail beside one of the deepest drifts, then I balanced myself with one foot on each of two joists and grasping my torch in one hand and a shovel in the other bowed my back and set to work. After a while, finding the position a great strain on the muscles, I rose to my feet and caught my head a very fair crack against the sloping rafters. This taught me caution, so that the next time I wished to ease my back I retreated some two yards in a crouching position before attempting to stand up. This brought me, as I discovered on regaining consciousness, directly beneath a cross- or tie-beam of a strength and rigidity which does credit to the builders of the aforesaid premises, whether demised or not.

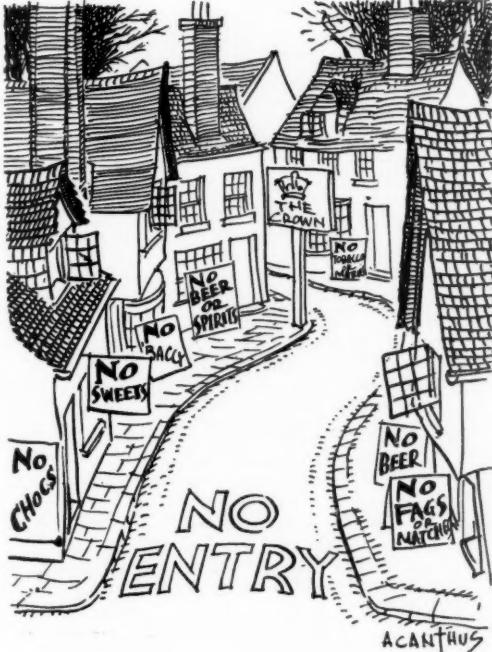
I will not attempt to tell you of the many wounds and abrasions I endured in that place, nor of the aching in all my limbs, nor of the curious admixture of snow and dust that adhered in increasing quantities to my clothes and person. I make no mention of the occasion when, treading by mishap upon a pair of tongs, I lost my balance and fell with one arm in the cistern and the other in a starling's nest of great size and antiquity. I pass over the shocking ill-luck that prompted me to raise my head while kneeling immediately beneath a rusty nail, so that finding blood on my fingers when I rubbed the place I was forced once again to rouse the household and thereafter to hang head downwards through the hole while the womenfolk, standing on the steps, administered healing unguents to the wound. Suffice it to say that in the end I lowered five and a half pailfuls of snow to waiting hands below and then, ordering the bath to be filled, stripped off my foul garments and plunged straight into it from the trap-door. And there I lay like the dead for the space of three quarters of an hour.

I shall be glad if you will pass on these facts to the Owner of the said dwelling-house, with a recommendation that steps be taken to exclude snow from the loft. When this matter has been attended to I shall be glad to replace the lintel above the bathroom door, mend the kitchen steps and repair the hall ceiling which, I regret to say, suffered considerably from the water displaced by my desperate dive into the bath.

I am, etc.,
the said H. F. E.

Ex-ARMY Offr. (41), Scot, single, pub. schl., 19 yrs.' comm. reg. serv., rec. retd., seeks remun., non-tech. emp. of perm. and prog. nature. Strong pers. and init., shrewd, tactful, thorough. Used handling men, equable temp. Consid. Army admin. exp. (adjt. thrice), incl. office control, accs. Well read, trav. Good know. French. Phys. fit. Good refs.—*Advt. in Daily Paper.*

Now why didn't he cut the word "Scot"?





"They're wearing their skirts shorter, I see."

The Grumbler

"WOT gets me down," said Charlie, "is nothin' goin' on,
Just sittin' frowstin' at the Post till midnight's come an' gone
Or doin' a spot o' fire-guard when there ain't no bloomin' fire—
That's what gets me down, chaps, an' I ain't no liar;
I'd rather 'ave the bombs again an' Jerries over droppin' 'em,
Tryin' t' set the town alight, an' us chaps stoppin' 'em;
Or 'elpin' folks to shelter; or anythin' t' do;
But these 'ere take-it-easy nights, they fair gets me blue."

Then Mike the fireman answered him. "Look 'ere," he says,
"me lad,
Suppose you was a Russo over there in Leeningrad
With th' snowdrifts creepin' round y' till they froze y'?
Or perhaps
You'd like a job in Libbya with some of *our* chaps;

The 'ot sun burnin' y', the cold rain soakin' y'—
Yus, an' in between whiles a sandstorm chokin' y'? . . .
Or wot about Malaya an' odds o' one t' ten?
Cor! Y'd 'ave somethin' for t' grouse about then.

"But 'ere y' sit at 'ome," he says, "a-drawin' of y'r pay;
You thank the boys as keeps y' 'ere; that's wot *I* say."
Then Charlie started laughin'—yes, laughin' like t' split;
"Mike," he says, "you're wonderful! Mike," he says,
"you're it!
Every word you say is true an' no one's goin' t' doubt it;
'Course I've nix t' grouse about—an' 'course I grouse about it.
Why? 'Cos I'm a Englishman an' cos I'm not a saint.
An' is there any Englishman who'd say 'e'd no complaint
If y' set 'im down in 'eaven for eternity? There ain't."

H. B.



A BOLD DREAM OF BIG BEN

[The Prime Minister has withdrawn the suggestion that his Parliamentary statements on the war should be electrically recorded and broadcast.]

Impressions of Parliament

Business Done

Tuesday, January 20th.—House of Lords:
Nincompoops are Discussed.

House of Commons: The Shape of Things to Come.

Wednesday, January 21st.—House of Commons: A Question of Record.

Thursday, January 22nd.—House of Commons: A Discussion on Airfield Defence.

Tuesday, January 20th.—Curious sort of atmosphere in the Commons' House of Parliament. The sort of atmosphere of the nursery when Nannie is of uncertain temper and the children are aching to revolt—but not too certain how that would go.

Members were worried and a little uneasy about events in the Far East. Outside they did not trouble to conceal the fact. Inside, under the eye of "Nannie" WINSTON CHURCHILL, they were less forthcoming.

Mr. CHURCHILL himself, fresh from his adventurous journey to the United States, Canada and Bermuda, entered cautiously, as though looking for the jug balanced on the top of the door. He was received with a general but

broadcasting, he surprised the House by proposing that that should be done with his next big speech by way of experiment.

Sir HUGH O'NEILL, Ulster Conservative, leaping up from the Opposition Front Bench, asked whether the critics were not to have a look-in, or a shout-in. After all, said he, it was Parliament's job to criticize.

Mr. CHURCHILL looked surprised at the cheers that greeted this first shot. Mr. HORE-BELISHA wanted to know how the account was to be made impartial. (More cheers.) Mr. MANDER wanted to be assured that interruptions would be broadcast too. (Even more cheers.)

Swiftly adopting a "Doesn't-matter-if-you-don't-want-it" attitude, Mr. CHURCHILL said he would not take it amiss if the House, asked more formally later, turned down the proposal—although (a trifle wistfully) it would have been an "easement" for him.

Even this rarely-failing plea did not work.

Mr. CHURCHILL then announced that he would make a war statement at a later date, perhaps demanding a vote of confidence. He added a somewhat acid comment on the debating capacity of his Cabinet colleagues by saying that *he* would both open *and* wind up the debate.

Mr. EDGAR GRANVILLE pleaded for the adjournment of the House to call attention to the need for more aircraft to defend Singapore, but the SPEAKER ruled that this was not definite, urgent, or of great enough public importance to satisfy the very exacting Standing Order governing these things.

Both Houses paid tribute to the late Duke of CONNAUGHT, who died last Friday, and offered The KING their condolences.

Over in the Lords, Lord LISTOWEL, in the absence of Lord ADDISON, formally moved a motion "calling attention to the adequacy" of aerodrome defence.

The noble Lord made it plain when he hurried in (apologising for the vagaries of a train) that "adequacy" was a misprint for "inadequacy." Lord TRENCHARD dealt adequately with Lord ADDISON's description of Air-Marshal Sir ROBERT BROOKE-POPHAM, Commander in Singapore, as a "nincompoop." This remark was most regrettable, said Lord TRENCHARD, living up to his nickname of "Boom," and adding, with a meaning look, that he would like to put it much stronger.

People were too fond of attacking serving Navy, Army and R.A.F. chiefs,

who could not answer back and too many of whom were getting "sacked." The just recipients of criticism were the Government, and if there were to be criticism of all who promised fair things, then there were many (this



THE BOOMERANG COMES BACK.

LORD ADDISON

with an all-embracing glance round the House) who might deserve the title of "nincompoop."

Geography and the law of gravity defeated us in Greece, Crete and elsewhere, said Lord TRENCHARD. He did not carry out his seeming intention of moving the repeal, there and then, of the Law of Gravity.

The word "nincompoop" also drew (so to speak) Lord CORK, who defended Sir ROBERT. He said Lord ADDISON was mistaken if he thought Singapore had any monopoly of nincompoops—so there! There were people who thought they could sit in London and know what ought to be done in the Arctic, the Antarctic and on The Line.

Lord MAUGHAM, talking about airfield defence, expressed the view that a Tommy-gun in the hand was worth two (or more) in the arsenal, and Lord SHERWOOD (Sir HUGH SEELY as was) replying, in a maiden speech, for the Air Ministry, promised to bear this axiom in mind.

He added that the Royal Air Force Regiment, whose special task it is to defend airfields, would be armed with weapons, which would be more advantageous than if they had not got them.



PEER OR PERI?

VISCOUNT STANSGATE

only moderate cheer. He bowed and smiled with cautious—rather hopeful—geniality.

In a few moments he was in action. Asked to consider the recording of his speeches in Parliament for later



"The next question comes from a soldier in the Tenth Legion, who asks for a definition of the word 'Barbarian.'"

Which moderate claim seemed to comfort the House quite a lot.

Lord ADDISON, complaining that the Government, like his train, had taken too long to get to its destination, withdrew his motion, and their Lordships went home.

Wednesday, January 21st.—Entering the Commons (this time without even the modest cheer of yesterday), Mr. CHURCHILL won the warmest and loudest cheer of the week by announcing that "as there seemed to be so much difference of opinion" on the broadcasting plan he would not pursue it.

The cheer contradicted the alleged "difference" of opinion and emphasized the virtual unanimity of the House on the proposal. Pressed by Captain PLUGGE to think the matter over again, Mr. CHURCHILL won a second cheer—and a gust of laughter—by saying: "I've had enough!"

Ministers did their share of the naughty-in-the-nursery stuff to-day. Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, Air Minister, was clearly suspected of "telling a

story" when he explained that schoolboys who had wrecked a few bombers (or something of the sort) in an R.A.F. airfield "had been observed, but the field was too big for them to be stopped." Members gasped in frank disbelief at the *naïveté* of this official reply, and Sir ARCHIBALD is to hear more of it.

Then Colonel MOORE-BRABAZON, Aircraft Production Minister, complained of "sniping and nagging"—a combination that suggested new terrors in marital life.

And, to cap it all, Mr. GEORGE HALL, of the Colonial Office, coined the phrase "There's a war on" in excuse for some shortcoming.

The House just could not take it. Members groaned. Soon afterwards they went home.

Their Lordships followed this example.

Thursday, January 22nd.—Saying, with a sly grin, that his one desire was to meet the wishes (kaleidoscopic though they be) of the House, Mr. CHURCHILL proposed a hybrid form of

debate to-day. Part of the discussion on the defence of airfields was in public, part in secret.

Mr. MAXTON intervened publicly to congratulate himself on having had the wisdom to tak' a slow train from Scotland, which accomplished the journey in a trivial nineteen hours, whereas those more farseeing colleagues who had patronized the fast train took twenty-seven, and he was from Scotland afore them.

When the cheers and laughter had died down, Mr. GARRO-JONES objected to the half-and-half oratorical shandy-gaff, and contended that it did not matter whether the debate was in public or secret, because Sir ARCHIBALD SINCLAIR, the Air Minister, would say nothing Lord SHERWOOD had not already said in Another Place.

Mr. GARRO-JONES is a sound prophet.

This being so, the secret session plan was dropped, and the child's-handful of Members who stayed and spoke had an audience of five faithful members of the Great British Public until the end.



"I never thought the Japanese would let me down like this."

Staff versus School

IT is true that the School won the annual football match against the Staff by seventeen clear goals. It is true also that this result represents the most crushing defeat ever suffered by the masters of St. Moribund's in these matches. But, as I have reminded the more querulous of my colleagues, the game is the thing. My goalkeeping has been severely and sometimes unfairly criticized, yet this note is not written to defend myself but rather to place on record the difficulties which were faced before the match took place. I will only repeat Browning's dictum concerning goalkeepers in general: "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's heaven for?"

Our first problem was the pitch. With the soccer field pitted with bomb craters, the rugby field diminished superficially by the agricultural exigencies of war, and the reserve pitches in constant occupation by the R.A.F.,

there were many who thought that the match should be cancelled. My suggestion that the hockey pitch should be used was thought by Charteris to be influenced by the comparative smallness of the goals and was promptly withdrawn.

Decision rested between the rugby and soccer grounds, and since Wilkinsummer the gardener was adamant in his refusal to transplant we were compelled to put up with the bomb craters. These might well have been filled in but for the Head's sentimental request to keep the holes in a state of repair so that they might remain as post-war souvenirs.

In previous years two matches had been played simultaneously—one at rugby and the other at soccer. With only one field available and with the staff sadly depleted a compromise was necessary. The rugger men wanted fifteen a side, handling of the ball, and

goals over the cross-bar. Soccer men voted for Association orthodoxy. Finally, we decided that there should be thirteen to a side, that the ball (spherical) could not be handled, that tackling *au rugby* should be permitted, and that goals could be scored only beneath the bar.

The appointment of the referee again caused difficulty. For many years the onerous task has been performed by old Schlesingstein the German master, whose interpretation of the international football code was felt by the Staff to be more catholic than the rigid rules favoured by the boys. Now that Schlesingstein was interred we must choose between Wilkinsummer and Mrs. Grool the matron. Wilkinsummer's rheumatism went against him and Mrs. Grool was appointed. Her known ability to emit a fiendish whistle by blowing between first and second fingers (a trick she

acquired as group-leader of the Brownies) was a powerful factor in her candidature.

All our problems were not yet solved. The venue was fixed; what of the date? We consulted the fire-watching rota, for each one was anxious to give of his best and to appear fresh and waking on the appointed day. The difficulty appeared insuperable until I offered magnanimously to fire-watch on the eve of the match. I almost rescinded the offer a moment later when Charteris stated that some goalkeepers he knew scarcely needed to be fit since their play consisted merely in turning and picking things up.

In the days that preceded the match I was able to utilize the occasion to press home certain points which are the bane of all French masters. It may be of service to others if I mention at least one of the original hooks which I devised for use with football bait. Why not arrange the pronominal objects in the familiar formation of the football team?

me te se nous vous
le la les
lui leur
y
en

You see there are five forwards, three halves, two backs, a goalkeeper and a ball-boy (en). I have found this device so successful that I feel I have no right to keep it to myself.

Even so I may mention that this ingenious trick caused the disfigurement of the notice-board announcement of the teams. My name was scratched through and a large mark of interrogation substituted. A clever pun, maybe, and one revealing the admitted success of my teaching methods, but hardly a credit to the colleague whom I suspect of making it.

The day of the match was fine and warm—warm enough to permit me to abandon the idea of wearing hockey pads and protectors. Just before the kick-off the School XIII were greatly encouraged by an aerial visit from H. A. F. Whigmore Senior, D.F.C. (prefect and football captain two years ago). He appeared over the playing fields, did a victory roll, and came near to scoring in a power dive which made me lie as flat as my stomach would permit between the posts.

The game itself was interesting.

○ ○

Commercial Candour

"To inspect these coats is an inducement to purchase something different."

Advt. in *New Zealand Paper*.

The Return

"**A**ND no words can ever express my gratitude to you for actually bringing me all the way from the station, especially as I know, dear, that you won't think me in any way strange if I break down completely."

"Weakness, Miss Littlemug—no wonder, after your operation and that long stay in hospital."

"No, dear, you're entirely mistaken. It isn't weakness at all. As I said to the nurses when I left, there is no reason now—none whatsoever—why I shouldn't pick up my bags and run like a hare all the way to the station, like anybody else. By a curious mischance, when I did pick up the bag just to show them, it fell out of my hand for *no reason at all*—but I shall replace the portion of the electric fire that was damaged, and we need say no more about it. But that shows you that there's no question of *weakness*. It's simply that I may very likely burst into tears when I see the house, standing there exactly where I left it ten weeks ago. On the other hand, I may do nothing of the kind."

"We shall know almost at once which it is to be, Miss Littlemug, because here *is* the house."

"Good heavens, dear, why is the top attic window open?"

"Old Mr. Link's widowed daughter has turned out all the rooms."

"Old Mr. Link's widowed daughter, dear? Not Mrs. Ruffle, then?"

"I'm afraid she was working for someone else last week. Now, Miss Littlemug, do be careful. Let me . . ."

"No, dear, no. Thank you a thousand times, but as one of my ancestors said, I believe at Balaclava, 'Recklessness, thy name is Littlemug.' Not that I believe in recklessness in everyday life for one instant—though Balaclava, naturally, was quite another thing. All right, dear, all right; I had a firm grip of the porch all the time."

"I thought you might like a cup of tea in your room at once, and Mr. Link's daughter left everything ready. Or shall I bring it to the drawing-room?"

"One moment, dear. She's left that print of dear old Windsor Castle dreadfully crooked. I wonder if the step-ladder . . ."

"Miss Littlemug, *really* . . . And, anyway, the step-ladder isn't in the hall."

"But, good heavens, it should be! In the housemaid's cupboard under the stairs. That is *where* I keep it. There, and nowhere else."

"Well, I happen to know it's in the attic now. I can bring it down again. Do, please, come and sit down and rest in the drawing-room."

"Dear, you're too kind, and the drawing-room all full of flowers and everything looking so nice . . . Well, really, I'm thankful to be home again."

"Then do rest on the sofa and I'll get your tea."

* * * * *

"Here's the tea, Miss Littlemug. I hoped I should find you on the sofa."

"No, dear. There are just one or two little things . . . I always keep the china poodles on *this* side, not on that. And I see she's put one of the cushions belonging to the spare bedroom down here, so I suppose the other one's upstairs—I'll run up in a moment—and I can't help wondering where she's hidden the tiny cane stool that yodels if you sit down in the very middle of the seat. It isn't in the cupboard, or under the piano, or behind the sofa, or still less at the right-hand corner of the fireplace where it *ought* to be. And then again—I'm sure she's done wonders—but she has *not* replaced the things on my desk exactly as they should be. The pen tray is quite out of position. And where, I wonder, is old Cousin Mabel's calendar? It *ought* to be hanging from the handle of the cupboard door."

"Miss Littlemug, do have some tea and rest a little. You know you really——"

"Yes, dear, certainly. Now why, I wonder, is this little jam-spoon here? I last saw it on my dear mother's invalid tray. The one I invariably use has a small dog's head on it—not a crest, dear, though you might think so, but our crest is a small beaker, with handles—now I wonder if I hadn't better just pop across to the pantry for a minute and see——"

"Do, please, try and rest."

"Dear, what else am I doing? If you'll only hand me all the bills that I see over there—and just give me my little notebook and pad from the desk—and the travelling-clock is at least ten minutes fast, but I can put that right in a second—and then the cup of tea in my free hand . . ." E. M. D.

○ ○

Things That Might Have Been Better Expressed.

"It is felt that now that Sir Stafford Cripps has restored friendly relations between Britain and Russia a professional diplomat can carry on."—*Daily Express*.



"Sorry your bacon's burnt, darling. I was busy listening to the Kitchen Front."

Letters to a Conscript Father

EAR DAD,—I was so glad to hear that you got your Medical over without catching anything. I really think this ought to qualify you for Grade One automatically, instead of Grade Two; all the chaps in my lot caught fearful colds at their Medicals, standing about in the draughts, but *they* were all passed Grade One.

Of course, it doesn't make any difference really what Grade you are, because you all do just the same things and just as much drill. The best thing is to be like my friend Bairstow—Grade One, but with Grade Two (A) feet—because that's pretty certain to keep you on light duties most of the time. The other day when we all had to sit in the Gym being bored to tears by a First Aid lecture, Bairstow only had to carry a lot of bedsteads from the Main Stores up the hill to East Camp.

But it does pay to be fit, Dad, really, otherwise you're always going sick, which is a great nuisance. Let me warn you that going sick is full of all sorts of pitfalls and not a bit the same thing as being a bit off-colour at home. First of all, you have so little time to decide whether you're going to go sick or not. The duty N.C.O. comes round at 0545 hours, you see, kicking the beds and shouting, "Any sick, lame or lazy?" as he walks down the hut, and the chances are that you feel a bit sick, anyway, being woken up like this. Well, you have to decide whether you're really sick or just hating being woken up by having your bed kicked.

If you decide that you really have the influenza, or mumps, or something bad like that, then you have to spring out of bed and catch the duty N.C.O. before he gets out of the other end of the hut and make him take your name and number. Once you've done that,

you've started something that will take some stopping.

The sick are bound to report outside Medical Building at 0715 hours, and after they've been there for half an hour or so, usually without any breakfast (because they have to bring with them their button-things and boot-things and shaving-kit and respirator and gas-cape, which always take a lot of getting together), the duty N.C.O. comes up again and lets them in. He takes a roll-call, and of course if you're not there it's just too bad. It's a *parade* you see, Dad, and it doesn't pay to forget that, because a charge of Absence from Parade is a pretty serious thing and may easily mean seven days' fatigues in the cookhouse tin-room. And I warn anyone against that.

So even if you find, after you've given the duty N.C.O. your name and number, that you aren't sick at all but

just don't feel like another day in the Army, don't decide not to go to Medical Building at 0715 hours. Of course it's a bad thing for the M.O. to find out that there isn't anything the matter with you, but the chances are he won't. He'll just say when you get to him in the queue, "Yes?"—and if you say quickly that your chest is tight and your teeth ache and you have a pain all down one side, then he'll give you a piece of paper and put you on light duties, like Bairstow.

The piece of paper is your prescription; but when you go into the Treatment Room where the orderlies are, don't expect to get a nice bottle of medicine with sealing-wax on the top; all you get is about an inch of quinine stuff in a beaker and you have to swallow it on the spot and get out quickly. Then you have to go back at 1330 hours for another half-inch, and at 1730 hours for another. And the next morning you have to parade sick again at 0715 hours (and 1330, and 1730), and the next day. And of course if you miss any of those parades, then you're on a charge.

Unfortunately, you're almost bound to miss one or more of the parades, because some of the light duties you get on may not be easy to leave just when you want to. If you're on fires, for instance, and the Station Warrant Officer sends you in to make up the C.O.'s fire at 1325 hours, and the C.O. sends you to get the Squadron Office key from Sergeant Coote and Sergeant Coote says it's in the pocket of his other trousers over in Married Quarters, then you stand a good chance of being absent from the 1330 hours parade. And it's no good trying to tell this to the Officer who tries your case, because he'll only ask why you didn't explain the circumstances to the C.O. As if anyone ever explained anything to the C.O.!

But perhaps I'm making it all sound a bit too complicated, Dad, and I don't want to worry you unnecessarily. When the time comes, you'll find it's all quite straightforward. The thing is of course never to go sick at all. I should think that statements taken from the average Sick Parade would show that none of them had been in the Forces more than a few days. Nobody goes sick twice.

Though I ought to add, perhaps, that if you *are* sick with something, it always pays to conceal it. Otherwise you'll get put on a charge for not going sick.

In my next letter I'll try to tell you something about going Dental Sick, which is another matter altogether.

Your loving Son, PETER.

AFTER the war, some people say They'll just grow flowers all the day
To make amends for (they allege) That war-time Upas tree, the Veg.; And other men whose needs are small Will rise at noon or not at all, And some will smoke (they'd like to bet)
Cigarette after cigarette, And some will forge new kinds of axes To whittle down the various taxes, And some will ape the Fascist nations And burn their book (King's Regulations), And everyone will have some fun And seek a place within the sun And get whatever he holds dear—Tea or tobacco, bets or beer, Sleep or success, gay things or grave, Some paper that we needn't save,

Or anything we've missed for years, Butter for smiles, onions for tears . . . Within our brains one thought is humming:
We all are sure a good time's coming.

Well, cullies, I have got a wish. When we get back to chips and fish, When we return to cakes and ale, I'll laugh and yet stay out of jail. No more they'll censor jokes away; No more, no more will people say That every rough remark I make Must be suppressed for England's sake, Or urge, lest worlds be blown to dust, I keep my visage straight or bust. When the millennium occurs, Oh, my dear sirs, Oh, sirs, Oh, sirs, I shall unload ten million slurs To cover England like a cloud—And, crikey, it will be allowed!



Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Woe is Mr. Wells!

WE have done those things we ought not to have done and can hardly expect Mr. H. G. WELLS to find any health in us. What we do expect from him, at least in his original character of novelist, is something more than blackboard sketches. *You Can't Be Too Careful* (SECKER AND WARBURG, 9/-) will add little to his literary reputation. And as a study in social science, in the breakdown of modern society as shown by one whom Mr. WELLS declares to be typical? Well, the study itself ignores a cardinal rule of science—that you must work from the facts. Or perhaps there are two sets of facts and Mr. WELLS is confusing them. Nobody will deny that the world just now is a sorry place, and that humanity will presently have to remake itself or perish: there it is impossible not to agree with our author. But try to reduce these general truths to the stature of one man, and the result is a character about as convincing as one of those villains in the lesser Elizabethan playwrights. This *Tewler* is mean all through, and from our knowledge of human nature—Mr. SHAW is a spontaneous response to Mr. WELLS!—men are seldom mean all through. They are lit occasionally by pitiful flickers of generosity and unselfishness, of unworldly aspiration and irrational remorse—interruptions in the general dreariness of human nature that may not be very important in themselves but do make comprehensible the spasmodic but persistent advances of mankind as a whole. Even their love-making is seldom so callous and insipid as poor *Tewler's*; and however much we

may disguise our more disreputable impulses, the fact that we do disguise them, and wherever possible in some trailing remnant of glory, might give most people to think twice. If *Tewler's* tale is interesting only to its author—and where he cannot save it from dullness no one else would venture to retell it—Mr. WELLS's generalities are much more lively, provocative and considerable, and stated with the heated partiality and some of the grim humour of a pamphlet of the eighteenth century.

28 Nobelsgate

Caught "caravanning for the Democrats" and holding what she insists is not to be called a salon in Washington, Mrs. FLORENCE JAFFRAY HARRIMAN suddenly found herself American Minister to Norway in June 1937, regaining New York via Petsamo in August 1940. *Mission to the North* (HARRAP, 8/6) recounts the history of the interval, beginning comparatively *piano* with trade interests such as whale-oil (which a sound American instinct apparently confines to soap), widening out into the "lively yet leisurely" social relations of Oslo and a vivid appreciation of the little country which, having (rather unwisely) trusted the Great Powers to respect its independence, could afford to make "social betterment" a whole-time job. Using some off-days of 1939 to see Russia in a "strictly tourist" fashion, her Excellency got to know her Norway really well. She even learnt to weave, because weaving, not bridge, was the pastime of her hostesses. And she had obviously become, as the Norwegian Prime Minister avers, "an understanding friend" by the time the Hun entered Oslo. The town looked lethargically on; sailors and peasants fought; and a crescendo of tragedy leads up to the (for an American) inescapable verdict: "The United States should have been a party to the League of Nations."



"But, my dear fellow, I shall probably be FAST asleep at 3 a.m. on the 23rd."

Land-Line

In *Life Line* (HEINEMANN, 8/6), Mr. CHARLES GRAVES praises (and how rightly!) the Convoy system and tells many good stories about it. He also pays much tribute to the submarine service, though it is amusing to hear that officers and ratings (who, he tells us, should be described as sub-mariners) "are always advised to avoid psychoanalysts." One would not have expected them to have much opportunity. His best chapters deal with "Odds and Ends," Superstitions, Pets, and Naval Humour, though a good many chestnuts have popped into the latter. All civilian readers should appreciate the Glossary of Staff Phraseology from which he quotes: "Under active consideration—Propose instituting a search for the file; In due course—Never; Have you any remarks?—Can you tell me what it's all about?" The book is readable enough, but sailors write better about the sea.

Frankau Entertains

Mr. GILBERT FRANKAU's new novel, *Winter of Discontent* (HUTCHINSON, 9/6), is published in America under the title *Air Ministry, Room 28*. In that room, during one of the raids on London, Air Vice-Marshal Ashdown was found dead—"Killed, Sir. By a bomb. It must have come in through the window." The author asks that no details of his plot should be revealed in any criticisms, but it will not help the reader much to know that the Air Vice-Marshal had a wife who did not want to see his body and a mistress who remarked "He made me suffer plenty." Mr. FRANKAU has written another excellent book and, even though it is not in his very best manner, he has, as usual, described



Shortsighted Traveller. "IS THERE SOME DELAY ON THE LINE, MY GOOD MAN?"
Naval Officer. "WHO THE —— DO YOU THINK I AM, SIR?"
Traveller. "ER—N-NOT THE VICAR, ANYWAY."

Frank Reynolds, January 29th, 1919

English action and conversation with accuracy and shown how well he can read between the lines. The edge of his irony seems to be sharpened by the red tape of his subject, and he has given us a first-class mystery story.

That Villain Mammon!

Mr. CLAUDE HOUGHTON has found an idea for a novel and may be congratulated on it. No amount of material comforts—one still thinks in terms of the unrationed years—will profit men if it turns them into mere materialists, and it is probably high time one took to heart the title of *All Change, Humanity!* (COLLINS, 9/6). Obviously something ought to be done about it. Since Mr. HOUGHTON has an exciting drama in mind, he naturally takes a rather poor view of his humanity. His millionaire ascetic could certainly have no more awful warning than the greedy,

sensual and very naughty relatives who can only regard him as mad. ("Madness" in their eyes signifies what wise men look forward to as sanity.) Yet once the scene is set, with all the good people on one side and all the bad on the other, something very odd happens: nothing happens. For though the curtain promises to go up on a moral thriller, it exposes instead something as modest as a French classical tragedy, in which everything important occurs out of sight and the audience must be content with being told about it. Off the stage the *Mannerings* go from worse to worst; there are suicides and divorces and things more dreadful still; and in fact the only edifying news is of the quiet, even inconspicuous, way the "madness" of the millionaire and his followers is spreading. On the stage everyone bursts out talking, and there, on a note of hope and confusion, this curious book ends. Humanity has apparently decided to go on to the next station.

Black-Out

SAPPER Sympson and I were drinking our usual quiet pint in the saloon bar of the Green Man when a sailor walked in and said in a loud voice: "Is this the King's Head?"

We told him that it was not.

"The King's Head," Sympson explained carefully, "is a few doors along to the right. You can easily recognize it because it has a big sign hanging outside with a picture of a king's head on it. This hostelry, on the other hand, has a green man painted on the sign, indicating that it is the Green Man."

The stranger did not seem particularly pleased with this speech.

"It is as black outside," he said, "as the inside of a cow, so how could I see whether it was the King's Head or the Green Man?"

This seemed reasonable enough, so to mollify him Sympson stood him a pint, and presently the sailor went out.

We were just discussing whether or not carrots really enabled a man to see in the dark when the door opened again and the same sailor, blinking his eyes in the bright light, said again: "Is this the King's Head?"

We laughed.

"No," said Sapper Sympson, "it is not the King's Head. You are back at the Green Man again. What happened? If you had gone along to the left . . ."

"You told me to go along to the right," said the sailor indignantly, "which I did. I saw some people coming out of a doorway, so I naturally supposed it was the King's Head, but it was a house that had been taken over by the military for billets, and

the sentry nearly ran me through with his bayonet."

"That's where my friend and I are billeted," said Sympson.

"Well, when I came out I stood in the dark square for a bit, and then I saw a gleam of light under this door, so I thought it must be the King's Head, and here I am. What are you drinking?"

"Mild-and-bitter," said Sympson. "Thanks. Now, don't forget to go to the left this time. It's only a few doors down."

The sailor departed, and Sympson bet me sixpence that he would be back within ten minutes.

"Some people," he said, "are absolutely helpless in the dark. Personally, I never have any difficulty at all. It isn't that I can see any better: I suppose it is a sort of instinct."

Well within the ten minutes I handed Sympson my sixpence, for the sailor was again standing in the doorway asking if he were in the King's Head.

"No, I see I'm not," he said. "You're the two fellows I was speaking to just now. I shan't try any more. I promised to meet a man in the King's Head at 6.30, but fate seems against me. So I'll stay here."

We chatted for a bit, and Sympson gave him a lot of tips about finding his way in the black-out, such as eating carrots and looking up instead of down, and shutting his eyes every time the lights of a car flashed in front of him.

"Thank you," said the sailor, "but even so I don't think I'll bother about finding the King's Head to-night."

We finished our beer and set off

back to our billets. It was certainly very dark, and I told Sympson that I was glad we had not very far to go.

"It wouldn't have mattered," said Sympson, "I know exactly where I am."

At that moment we both fell down a hole. It was one of those holes that are never there when you look for them in the day-time, but that appear, or rather, do not appear, as soon as it gets really dark.

We picked ourselves up.

"You shouldn't have talked," said Sympson. "It is necessary to concentrate in the black-out, or you lose your way. But here is our door."

We pushed it open and marched in, expecting to be greeted by the sentry.

Instead our friend the sailor told us that we had not arrived at our billets.

"This is the Green Man," he said; "you can tell it because there is a sign outside with a Green Man painted on it."

We thanked him and ordered another round of drinks. Sympson mentioned the episode to the landlord, who laughed heartily.

"As a matter of fact," he said, "this isn't the Green Man at all. It's the King's Head."

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Semantics

YOUNG 'Erb asks Parson if it's true Our English way's to muddle through.

"Yes. Mind it's *through*," 'e says to 'Erb;
"The adverb modifies the verb."



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